

LITHUNIA



Lithuania Security and long-term stability in Northern Europe depend on the integration of stable, secure Baltic states into Euro-Atlantic security and economic structures. By supporting Lithuania's development of a credible modern military force that is fully deployable and interoperable with NATO forces, the United States fosters stability and dialogue in the region. U.S. assistance to Lithuania sustains and expands the strong partnership the United States has formed with Lithuania, supports its commitment to ongoing activities in Afghanistan and Iraq, and works with the Lithuanian military to help it develop niche capabilities needed by NATO. In addition, the transformation of the Lithuanian military into a modern force allows it to cooperate with Ukrainian, Georgian, and other militaries and serve as a positive influence for stability in the region.

FOREIGN RELATIONS: Lithuania became a member of the United Nations (UN) on September 17, 1991 and is a signatory to a number of UN organizations and other international agreements. It is also a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Coordinating Council, and the Council of Europe. Lithuania gained membership in the World Trade Organization on May 31, 2001. In November 2002, Lithuania was invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and officially became a member on March 29, 2004. On May 1 of that same year, Lithuania joined the European Union.

Lithuania's foreign policy is based primarily on protecting itself and the Eastern European region from what it perceives as an expansionist Russia. Lithuania uses its membership in both NATO and the EU to promote security and democracy in Eastern Europe. It strongly advocates NATO membership for both Georgia and Ukraine and increased EU political and economic engagement to the region as a whole, including its neighbor Belarus. Lithuania maintains foreign relations with 98 countries through a network of 42 embassies and 35 honorary consuls. It has seven diplomatic missions to international organizations and one special mission to Afghanistan.

Lithuania's liberal "zero-option" citizenship law has substantially erased tensions with its neighbors. Its suspension of two strongly ethnic Polish district councils on charges of blocking reform or disloyalty during the August 1991 coup cooled relations with Poland, but bilateral cooperation markedly increased with the holding of elections in those districts and the signing of a bilateral friendship treaty in 1994. Relations with Poland are now among the closest enjoyed by Lithuania. Although a similar bilateral friendship agreement was signed with Belarus in 1995, Lithuania has joined the United States and other European nations in strongly urging the Government of Belarus to adopt much-needed democratic and economic reforms. President Adamkus was instrumental in brokering a peaceful resolution to the electoral challenges in Ukraine in 2004, and Lithuania plays an important leadership role in promoting democracy throughout the region.

U.S.-LITHUANIAN RELATIONS: The United States established diplomatic relations with Lithuania on July 28, 1922. The Soviet invasion forced the closure of the Legation to Lithuania on September 5, 1940, but Lithuanian representation in the United States continued uninterrupted. The United States never recognized the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the U.S.S.R. and views the present Government of Lithuania as a legal continuation of the interwar republic. In 2007, the United States and Lithuania celebrated 85 years of continuous diplomatic relations. Lithuania has enjoyed most-favored-nation treatment with the United States since December 1991. Since 1992, the United States has committed more

than \$100 million in Lithuania to economic and political transformation and to humanitarian needs. The United States and Lithuania signed an agreement on bilateral trade and intellectual property protection in 1994 and a bilateral investment treaty in 1997. In 1998, the United States signed a "Charter of Partnership" with Lithuania and the other Baltic countries establishing bilateral working groups focused on improving regional security, defense, and economic issues. Since 2004, the United States deals with Lithuania on regional security and defense matters primarily through NATO fora. In November 2008 Lithuania joined the Visa Waiver Program, which allows Lithuanians short-term travel to the United States visa-free.

Peace and Security: U.S. assistance to Lithuania provides a significant return on investment by maintaining strong political support for Coalition operations and a willingness to provide personnel, equipment, and associated support. Funds will provide military equipment and training to assist the modernization of the Lithuanian military and ensure Lithuania's continued participation in international peacekeeping missions as well as in other U.S. and NATO stability operations. This transformation will allow Lithuania to coordinate, deploy, and sustain interoperable formations within NATO structures capable of dealing with changing security priorities. These programs will be implemented through the U.S. Department of Defense.

Focus on Performance: The increased funding will have a direct impact on the capability of the Lithuanian Armed Forces (LAF) to conduct and sustain international stability and support operations abroad. The funding will be used to create an additional Water Purification Platoon, equip a Tactical Air Control Party, and secure spare parts to ensure critical tactical vehicles are Fully-Mission-Capable. Additionally, the funds will provide pre-deployment training support to soldiers deploying to Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq as well as equipment such as night vision goggles and secure tactical communications that will make them more interoperable. The funded initiatives will improve the Lithuanian Provincial Reconstruction Team's ability to secure and sustain their base and allow them to provide more humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan's Ghor Province. The funds will also significantly increase the capability of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces located in the Helmand province. These funds will create capabilities that will enable the LAF to prepare formations to fulfill NATO Rapid Reaction Force and EU Battle Group requirements in 2010 and beyond. The funds will also help to mitigate cuts in the Lithuanian defense budget caused by the ongoing financial crisis, and will help to avoid deeper reductions in its peacekeeping troops. (Note that the targets given refer to numbers of Lithuanian troops.)